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THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE MUSEUM

NOTE

THE educational work of the Museum is so varied, and in some cases is so interwoven with its different activities that it has seemed wise to make a brief statement which shall give those who desire to acquaint themselves with it an idea of its extent. This work is carried on by four Instructors and an officer called an Associate in Industrial Arts, and through a Lending Department, the Information Desk, the Library, the Reference Collection of Photographs, and the Study Rooms.

In detail:

- I. The Instructors give their services
 1. to members, visitors, and private schools
 2. to city high schools, in and out of the Museum building
 3. to elementary schools, in and out of the building
 4. to Saturday and Sunday groups of visitors, clubs, and special groups.
- II. The Lending Collections, consisting chiefly of lantern slides, photographs, and casts, serve private and public lecturers and public school teachers, not only in New York, but in all states east of the Mississippi River.
- III. The Information Desk serves everybody entering the Museum by answering questions, and by arranging for work done in the galleries.
- IV. The Library of approximately 40,

000 books is at the disposal of all readers for reference.

V. The Reference Collection of Photographs, numbering approximately 50,000, is free for use by all students.

VI. The Associate in Industrial Arts is a go-between connecting the Museum and professional practical workers and trade papers.

VII. The Study Rooms, containing duplicates and surplus collections (those not on exhibition), are free to all students.

VIII. Lectures in a number of courses are open to the members, the general public, and to special groups of the public and of the public schools.

H. W. KENT.

THE SCHOOL-ROOM AND THE GALLERY

WHAT help does the Museum offer to the teacher in our schools? Considering first the teachers of the Public Schools of New York City who have every facility without charge, the answer is, everything that we can think of and that they can suggest. To be specific, the teacher may meet the Museum Instructor either as an individual or as one of a group, for her own pleasure or profit. There is opportunity here for a wide choice according to the preference of the individual. Help may be required in a final verification of gallery references for the teacher's own outline, a course

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

in the history of art may be requested, or assistance given in the selection of cross-stitch borders for a class in sewing. Numberless other possibilities suggest themselves.

These same teachers may bring their classes to the Museum Instructor, using the collections according to their needs. A class from a Commercial High School may study the technical processes of metalwork and its resulting quality of design and surface; a class in salesmanship may examine the process of lace-making and decipher the stitches added by the hands of different makers; history, language, and literature classes will find the characteristics studied in those subjects illuminated in vivid fashion in the architecture and furniture, the costumes and ornaments of the corresponding periods. The advantages of correlation with the studies of the Elementary Schools have resulted in many instances in Museum appointments regularly scheduled in school hours. In all these cases, although as a rule the student may not touch the object, the strength of the impression is enhanced immensely by seeing the actual thing standing out in space and ready to be examined from all sides. The pleasure which the eye receives from form may in part be realized in reproductions, but not that which is due to texture and color. And however much the Museum visit may seem to be a part of the system, the end of it all is to awaken the eye to the pleasure of seeing and the whole mind to the fact that art is one of the "permanent satisfactions of life" of which we cannot afford to deprive ourselves. That this consciousness may become

a motive power in the child himself is best illustrated by the classes of children who are allowed to attend the Museum meeting as a reward of merit. It works.

Sometimes it is impossible to bring the class to the Museum. When that is the case, the Museum goes to the class. A talk or a story may be given in the assembly period to the class, the department, or the whole school. The Instructor brings the lantern slides, and if the school is not equipped with an instrument, the lantern and operator as well.

But the teacher is not obliged to reach the Museum objects through the Instructor. Not only the galleries, but the classrooms and illustrations are available for her personal use, including lantern slides, photographs, charts, models (such as the Roman house), and objects from the collections, in case a special study or a drawing lesson requires their use.

The above are all instances of the response to personal requests and might be extended almost indefinitely. Similar arrangements may be made by any teacher in private schools and in public schools outside Greater New York; in these cases a charge is made according to the announcement on page 16.

How the teachers may make use of the lending collections Miss Davis explains elsewhere.

The Museum is engaged in a campaign of usefulness to the schools. In no way does it desire or intend to duplicate school work or to complicate the school curriculum, already comprehensive enough. It recognizes two functions at least in its relation to

EDUCATIONAL WORK

the schools besides the informative one—namely, the opening up of new sources of pleasure through stories for the younger children and through a more specialized study for older classes, and the illustration of the larger “whole” behind the “parts.” The announced talks based upon the Courses of Study have as a definite intention the drawing together of subjects so assiduously isolated by the immature student. With the gradual disappearance from the curriculum of the secondary schools of ancient history and the languages of antiquity with all their ramifications, the Museum is called upon to supply some of the color and romance, some of the cultural background of our own civilization which is an inheritance from Greece. Homer and Greek mythology are a part of the High School course in English. In the sculpture gallery Greek ideals come to the students in the original language. Some one who is familiar with the sculpture may show them how it embodied Greek ideals of beauty and goodness, how it illustrated their myths, what it meant in Raphael’s day, and why casts of those works stand in our school halls now. The English class, the mediaeval history class the civics class have a common interest here. There is no danger of confusion, the method has centrifugal value.

During the season of 1920-21 the Museum for the first time gave a course for the classes in one of our leading

Normal Schools. This is planting seed which should bear a hundredfold.

The organized course for Elementary School teachers, which was begun last year and which requires a period of several years for its completion, has a similar significance. This course is designed primarily to reach classes from distant schools which are unable to visit the Museum. Synopses of the talks and selected sets of lantern slides are provided for the teachers who attend the course, in order that they in turn may in their schools connect the Museum with their school studies.

In accordance with our usual custom, in 1920-21 a short series of talks for teachers was given, taking up subjects of general interest rather than a consecutive course.

Without having been planned primarily with reference to the schools, the Sunday Story-Hours have been recognized so largely by the school authorities and so incorporated into the week’s work that they properly find their place in this list.

As this BULLETIN has been prepared for the convenience of teachers, the relation of the Museum to the schools has been the topic treated. But the same purpose of serving individual and community needs is the aim in meeting any visitors who may care to ask for “special direction or assistance in seeing the collections.”

EDITH R. ABBOT.